DRAFT

Ms. Jennifer Vick
Stillwater Sciences
2532 Durant Avenue, Suite 201
Berkeley, CA 94704

Dear Ms. Vick:

I am writing in support of the Merced River Dredger Tailings Reach project.

The San Joaquin River Management Program provides a forum to identify problems and solutions to issues related to wildlife, flood protection, water quality, water supply, fisheries, and recreation. The SJRMP Action Team and Advisory Council have reviewed and discussed this project and support the effort to restore the natural floodplain and improve spawning and rearing conditions for fall chinook salmon in the Merced River.

The Advisory Council is in support of the project proposed by Stillwater Sciences and understands that restoring the floodplain will increase flood protection and by improving the channel and gravel quality will result in increased survival of salmonid eggs and juveniles.

The 1995 San Joaquin River Management Plan recommends projects related to flood protection and channel and spawning gravel work (see p. 22). This recommendation is based upon improving and restoring areas previously mined for gold and gravel. In combination with flow and channel improvements, these projects can increase adult salmon populations.

If you have any questions in this regard, please call Paula Landis at (559) 230-3310.

Sincerely,

Timothy Ramirez, Chair
San Joaquin River Management Program
Advisory Council

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION IS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES

Stillwater Sciences

2532 Durant Avenue, Suite 201 Berkeley, CA 94704 Phone (510) 848-8098 Fax (510) 848-8398

Robert C. Lampa, Engineer
Department of Water Resources
San Joaquin District
3374 E. Shields Avenue, Room A7
Fresno, CA 93726-6913

September 6, 2001

Dear Mr. Lampa:

I am writing to request a letter of support from SJRMP for a proposal being developed for CALFED FY 2002 funding. Stillwater Sciences is currently working with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and URS Greiner to develop a proposal to begin restoration implementation in the Dredger Tailings Reach of the Merced River. Since 1999, Stillwater has been working with the Merced Irrigation District, CDFG, California Department of Water Resources, Merced County, and the Merced River Stakeholder Group and Technical Advisory Committee to develop a comprehensive restoration plan for the Merced River from Crocker-Huffman Dam to the confluence with the San Joaquin River. During this process, we have completed several baseline assessments of conditions in the Merced River and have produced initial design guidelines for channel and floodplain restoration in the gravel-bedded reach of the river based on our field studies and sediment transport modeling.

The Dredger Tailings Reach extends from Crocker-Huffman Dam (RM 52) to RM 45.2, approximately 1.2 miles downstream of the Snelling Road bridge. During the early twentieth century, this reach was dredged for gold. As a result the channel in this reach is confined by piles of dredger tailings, which have replaced the natural floodplain soils and floodplain forest and have increased floodplain elevation along the river. The draft Restoration Plan, which will be delivered to the Stakeholder Group and Technical Advisory Committee on September 17, 2001, identifies gravel augmentation and floodplain restoration in the Dredger Tailings Reach as an important near-term action for restoring geomorphic and ecological processes in the river and improving spawning and rearing conditions for fall chinook salmon.

The objectives of the proposed project are to:

- continue stakeholder and landowner outreach to secure support of the project;
- complete field studies and modeling necessary to develop a detailed implementation plan for the entire reach;

- develop project-level designs for pilot project implementation at the CDFG Merced River Ranch parcel; and
- implement the first phase of the large-scale gravel augmentation and the Merced River ranch pilot project.

The tasks currently included in the proposed scope are provided in the table below.

TASK	DESCRIPTION	
PHASE IV-A: REACH-SCALE IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING, DESIGN, AND COORDINATION		
Task A-1.	Assess the occurrence of mercury in the Dredger Tailings reach and the risk of mobilizing mercury into the environment.	
Task A-2.	Conduct field and modeling investigations needed for design of gravel augmentation and floodplain restoration.	
Subtask A-2a.	*Conduct detailed field surveys to document channel and floodplain cross section, channel profile, and bed texture.* • *Channel profile from Crocker-Huffman Dam to RM XX.* • *Channel cross section from Crocker-Huffman Dam to RM XX* • *Bed texture*	
Subtask A-2b.	*Develop and apply a detailed sediment transport model for designing long-term gravel augmentation.*	
Subtask A-2c.	*Document topography, volume, and texture of the dredger tailings.*	
Subtask A-2d.	*Develop and apply a HEC-RAS model to compute current and post-restoration flood conveyance in the reach.*	
Task A-3.	Develop a draft and final implementation and monitoring plan for gravel augmentation and floodplain restoration in the reach.	
Task A-4.	Initiate Baseline Monitoring.	
Task A-5.	Coordinate with the Merced River TAC and Stakeholder Group.	
PHASE IV-B: ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION AND PERMITTING		
Task B-1.	Environmental Documentation and Permitting	
PHASE IV-C: PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION		
Task C-1.	Implement Phase I of in-channel gravel augmentation.	
Subtask C-1a.	*Implement first phase of gravel infusion/augmentation*	
Subtask C-1b.	*Monitoring*	
Task C-2.	Pilot floodplain restoration project at the Merced River Ranch	
Subtask C-2a.	*Preliminary Design (Grading and Vegetation).*	
Subtask C-2b.	*Design-level Grading and Vegetation.*	
Subtask C-2a.	*Monitoring and Experimentation.*	

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding this proposed project.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Vick
Project Manager